Without consideration for any doctrinal points of view, theological implications or consensus, based solely upon all of the possible lexical and grammatical constructs that might be allowable, would the Greek grammar and vocabulary allow for Matthew 25:46 to be translated: “And these shall depart towards the punishment of the aion: but the righteous towards the life of the aion.”

Based on my extensive research into the Greek grammar and lexicography of Matthew 25:46, I can now provide you with a comprehensive analysis of whether this verse can grammatically sustain the translation you've proposed.

Pure Grammatical and Lexical Analysis of Matthew 25:46

The Greek Text

καὶ ἀπελεύσονται οὗτοι εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον, οἱ δὲ δίκαιοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον

Grammatical Parsing

The critical elements for your question are:

- **εἰς (eis)**: Preposition governing the accusative case, with a semantic range including "into," "to," "toward," "for" [1] [2]
- **κόλασιν (kolasin)**: Accusative singular feminine noun from κόλασις, meaning "punishment," "correction," "chastening" [3] [4]
- **αἰώνιον (aionion)**: Accusative singular feminine adjective from αἰώνιος [5] [6] [7]
- **ζωὴν (zōēn)**: Accusative singular feminine noun meaning "life"
- **αἰώνιον (aionion)**: Same adjective form as above

Lexical Range of αἰώνιος

The adjective αἰώνιος demonstrates a well-documented semantic range in Greek lexicography:

Primary meanings:

- "Eternal," "everlasting," "perpetual" [8] [9]

- "Long-lasting," "age-long" [10] [11]
- "Pertaining to an age," "belonging to an age" [12] [13] [14]

Etymological derivation:
The adjective is formed from the noun αἰών (aion, "age" or "era") plus the adjectival suffix -ιος (-ios), which typically means "pertaining to" or "belonging to". Multiple scholarly sources confirm that the -ιος suffix creates adjectives with the semantic force of "pertaining to" the root noun. [13] [15] [16] [17] [18] [12]

The Critical Grammatical Question

Can αἰώνιον function to mean "of the aion" in this construction?

Here the grammar becomes decisive:

Standard attributive construction present in Matthew 25:46:

- The text has: εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον (accusative noun + accusative adjective)
- This is a straightforward attributive adjective construction where αἰώνιον directly modifies κόλασιν [19] [20] [21]
- Both words agree in case (accusative), gender (feminine), and number (singular) [22] [7]

What would be required for "punishment of the aion":

- Greek would require a genitive construction: εἰς κόλασιν τοῦ αἰῶνος
- This would be: accusative noun + genitive article + genitive noun [23] [24] [25]
- The genitive case explicitly marks the "of" relationship in Greek grammar [26] [23]

Can the Adjective Carry Genitive Meaning?

This is the crucial question for your translation. The evidence shows:

Semantic possibility:
Multiple lexicons and scholarly works acknowledge that αἰώνιος can carry the meaning "pertaining to an age" or "of the age". The etymological analysis strongly supports this: if αἰών means "age," then αἰώνιος (aion + ios) would naturally mean "pertaining to the age". [27] [14] [28] [18] [10] [12] [13]

Grammatical form:

- While αἰώνιον is in accusative case (not genitive), Greek adjectives can semantically convey relationships that approximate genitival meaning [29]
- The -ιος suffix itself creates an adjectival relationship that can be glossed as "of" or "pertaining to" the root noun [15] [16]
- Adjectives derived from nouns often retain semantic connections to their nominal roots [30] [29]

Parallel usage:
When αἰώνιος is paired with chronological terms (χρόνος), it clearly means "age-times" rather

than "eternal times". This demonstrates that the adjective can function to specify age-related rather than strictly eternal duration.[31] [10]

Translation Precedents

Several literal translations have rendered κόλασιν αἰώνιον with age-related terminology:

- Rotherham: "age-abiding correction"[32]
- Young's Literal: "punishment age-during"[32]
- Concordant Literal: "chastening eonian"[32]
- David Bentley Hart: "the chastening of that Age"[33]

These translators understood αἰώνιον as carrying the semantic force of "pertaining to the age".[34] [35] [32]

The Verbal Idea in κόλασις

Additionally, κόλασις itself is a noun of action (verbal noun), which can take various relationships. The phrase κόλασιν αἰώνιον could be understood as "punishment [characterized by/pertaining to/belonging to] the age".[36] [37] [38] [39] [14]

The Parallel Construction

Crucially, the same grammatical construction appears twice in the verse:

1. εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον
2. εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον

If αἰώνιον in the first phrase can mean "of the aion," then grammatically it must be able to carry that meaning in the second phrase as well: "life of the aion". This creates semantic parallelism where both punishment and life are characterized as "belonging to the age [to come]".[40] [14] [28]

Expert Scholarly Opinion

Numerous Greek scholars have argued that when Greek adjectives are formed with the -ιος suffix from temporal nouns, they retain age-specific rather than strictly durational meanings:

"Since αἰών meant 'an age,' αἰώνιος properly means 'belonging to an age' or 'age-long'; anyone claiming it must always signify 'endless' is defending a viewpoint that even Augustine largely abandoned".[41] [28]

"The adjective αἰώνιος is derived from αἰών and cannot mean anything greater than the noun from which it is derived".[42] [18]

Conclusion

Yes, the Greek grammar and vocabulary do allow for Matthew 25:46 to be translated as you propose.

The lexical range of αἰώνιος demonstrably includes "pertaining to the age" or "of the age", and while the grammatical construction uses an attributive adjective rather than an explicit genitive phrase, the adjectival suffix -ιος itself conveys a relationship that can be accurately rendered as "of" or "pertaining to" the root noun αἰών.[14] [16] [17] [10] [12] [13] [15]

Your proposed translation—"And these shall depart towards the punishment of the aion: but the righteous towards the life of the aion"—represents a grammatically and lexically defensible rendering that reflects:

1. The etymological derivation of αἰώνιος from αἰών[8] [10] [13]
2. The semantic function of the -ιος suffix as creating "pertaining to" relationships[16] [15]
3. The established lexical range of αἰώνιος in Greek literature[11] [10] [27]
4. The parallel treatment of both nouns in the verse[40] [14]
5. Precedent from other literal translations[35] [33] [32]

From a purely grammatical and lexical standpoint, absent any theological or interpretive framework, this translation falls within the allowable range of what the Greek text can legitimately express.[28] [10] [13] [14]

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